

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L HELSINKI 0146

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FI, GW

SUBJ: VISIT OF WEST GERMAN FONMIN HANS-DIETRICH
GENSCHER TO FINLAND (I)

1. WEST GERMAN FONMIN HANS-DIETRICH GENSCHER WILL
ARRIVE FINLAND JANUARY 23, FOR A BRIEF OFFICIAL
VISIT. ACCORDING TO FINNISH MFA, GENSCHER WILL BEGIN
HIS TWENTY-EIGHT HOUR VISIT BY ATTENDING A LUNCHEON
PRESIDENT KEKKONEN IS GIVING FOR HIM. IN AFTERNOON
HE WILL HAVE OFFICIAL DISCUSSIONS WITH FONMIN
KARJALAINEN. FINNISH PRESS EXPECTS THAT CSCE,
BALTIC SEA QUESTIONS, UN MATTERS, AND BILATERAL
MATTERS, PARTICULARLY TRADE, WILL BE THE
MAIN TOPICS OF DISCUSSION. IN EVENING KARJALAINEN
IS HOSTING A DINNER FOR GENSCHER. ON FRIDAY
MORNING (JAN. 24) GENSCHER WILL HAVE A FORTY-FIVE MINUTE
MEETING WITH PRIME MINISTER SORSA. THIS WILL BE
FOLLOWED BY A PRESS CONFERENCE, AFTER WHICH
GENSCHER IN TURN HOSTS A LUNCHEON. WEST GERMAN
PARTY WILL DEPART AT 3 PM ON FRIDAY.

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2. THIS IS THE FIRST OFFICIAL VISIT TO FINLAND BY A WEST GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTER. IT IS A RETURN VISIT FOR ONE KARJALAINEN MADE TO FRG IN SEPTEMBER 1974. ACCORDING TO WHAT WE HAVE LEARNED FROM LOCAL KNOWLEDGEABLE SOURCES, ACTUAL TIMING OF VISIT WAS DECIDED RATHER SUDDENLY. APPARENTLY GENSCHER HAD BEEN SCHEDULED TO ATTEND A REGIONAL MEETING OF GERMAN AMBASSADORS SOMEWHERE, AND WHEN THIS MEETING WAS CANCELLED HE IS SAID TO HAVE DECIDED TO FILL THE SUDDEN GAP ON HIS CALENDAR WITH A VISIT TO FINLAND. ANOTHER REASON GIVEN IS THAT HAD GENSCHER WAITED TO MAKE THE VISIT IN MARCH OR APRIL AS WAS THE ORIGINAL PLAN, IT WOULD PROBABLY HAVE BEEN NECESSARY TO POSTPONE IT BECAUSE OF IMPORTANT GERMAN LOCAL ELECTIONS THAT ARE COMING UP.

3. EVEN WITH SUDDENNESS OF VISIT IT IS SURPRISING THAT THERE WAS PRIOR TO ARRIVAL DAY LITTLE MENTION OF IT IN FINNISH PRESS. IT IS NOT QUITE CLEAR TO US WHETHER THIS IS A CASE OF FINNS AND/OR GERMANS DECIDING TO PLAY IT DOWN OR FINNISH PRESS NOT FINDING IT VERY NEWSWORTHY.

4. RELATIONS BETWEEN FINLAND AND FRG HAVE BEEN SOMEWHAT STRAINED. PRESIDENT KEKKONEN HAS TAKEN WEST GERMAN PRESS ARTICLES ON FINLANDIZATION RATHER PERSONALLY, OCCASIONALLY GOING PUBLICLY TO A COUNTER-ATTACK. KARJALAINEN HAS ALSO PUBLICLY EXPRESSED HIS DISPLEASURE OVER PRESS TREATMENT OF FINLAND IN WEST GERMANY DURING HIS OFFICIAL VISIT THERE.

5. THE IMAGE OF FRG IN FINLAND IS NOT MOST POSITIVE POSSIBLE AT THIS TIME AND THE SAME CAN PROBABLY BE SAID OF FINLAND'S IMAGE IN FRG, CONSIDERING NATURAL UNHAPPINESS THAT WEST GERMANS MOST LIKELY FEEL OVER FINLAND'S POLICY OF BEING IN FOREFRONT IN RECOGNIZING BOTH GERMANIES. THE SAME IMAGE PROBLEM DOES NOT EXIST FOR WEST GERMAN PRODUCTS, HOWEVER. THEY ARE PERHAPS TOO WELL LIKED IN

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FINLAND -- TO THE POINT OF CREATING A TRADE BALANCE DEFICIT FOR FINLAND IN ITS TRADE WITH FRG OF ABOUT FIVE HUNDRED MILLION DOLLARS IN 1974. THERE APPEARS TO BE NO EASY SOLUTION FOR THIS PROBLEM BUT IT CAN BE ASSUMED THAT TRADE WILL BE ONE OF MAIN TOPICS OF DISCUSSION DURING GENSCHER'S VISIT.
KREHBIEL

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